



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

13 April 2026
Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy
Audubon Society of Rhode Island

RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2218 — Building Performance Standards Act of 2026

Dear Chairwoman Sosnowski and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment & Agriculture,

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, representing our 17,00 members and supporters, I am writing to express our strong support for S2218, the Building Performance Standards Act of 2026.

As the state advances toward the Act on Climate requirement of net-zero emissions by 2050, buildings are an essential step. S2218 gives OER and DEM the tools to set clear, verifiable performance standards for large buildings ($\geq 25,000$ sq. ft.) in five-year increments, until 2050, that collectively place the sector on a credible path to the goal(s) set for 2050.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island recognizes climate change as one of the single greatest threats to birds, other wildlife, and habitats that we protect and share with Rhode Islanders. We also recognize that climate change creates environmental injustice, disproportionately affecting specific communities. An important piece of this proposed legislation is the creation of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board, which centers these communities' needs in the creation and implementation of this program, minimizing further impacts caused by climate change and environmental degradation.

Audubon Society of Rhode Island is leading the way in showing what building decarbonization looks like with our RePower Audubon initiative. We aim to place all our facilities on 100% renewable energy via carport solar canopies, install efficient, all-electric heat pumps, and achieve net-zero by 2030.

The steps our organization is taking to reach net-zero across our buildings and facilities cuts pollution, emissions, lowers operating costs over time, and protects the species, habitats, and communities we serve. The Building Performance Standards Act can achieve similar ends and help scale net-zero success across the large-building landscape in Rhode Island.

S2218 will improve building performance at the pace that Rhode Islanders, our wildlife, our ecosystems, and the Act on Climate demand. It achieves this while giving owners time, flexibility, and support to plan. We kindly urge you to support the passage of this bill.

Regards,
Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy

Connecting All People With Nature

12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, Rhode Island 02917 • (401) 949-5454 • asri.org